1: Honigmann: E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

things according to the detailed specifications of adults; rather the child is given an opportunity to work out for himself the details of many cultural tasks. The responsibility accorded to a twelve year old was vividly demonstrated in Lower Post when five children, ranging from seven to twelve, climbed into a boat to cross the Liard River. The oldest boy could not start the outboard motor and the vessel began to drift down the swift current. He gave orders to his companions, and four children seized the oars, two on each side, and in that way they crossed. §66

Correlated with the child's early development of independence and a sense of personal responsibility is the fact that children, especially girls, are not long exempt from making economic contributions to the family. It must be realized, however, that in a society where only relatively brief periods of intense labor are regarded as necessary and in which duties are undertaken heartily, without compulsion, there remains abundant free time which children may claim for themselves. The Kaska girl, like her mother, is not a household drudge and the economic obligations of children do not restrain either sex from play or from social interaction with agemates. §66 §67

Adolescence

The period from puberty to marriage is a relatively short one for the Kaska girl and only slightly longer for the boy. It is a time which marks the full growth of the independence for which young people have been prepared since early childhood. No social recognition marks the transition to puberty in the boy or girl. §82

Menarche is handled so privately by a girl's mother that sometimes not even the father is aware that his daughter has reached physical maturity. Separation of menstruants has only recently disappeared.* Apart from the fact that some men refrain from sexual intercourse during menstrua, there are practically no doubtless restricting girls' behavior at this time. Since women are reluctant to speak of menstruation, even to other women, the subject was not a suitable one for obtaining detailed information. According to Pastora Donnelly, no elsewhere is ways to catch the menstrual flow. Observation suggests that younger women often change from slacks to dresses when the flow is in progress. §81 §91

For the girl puberty is accompanied by few major changes in her economic role. She has been using a small ulu for a year or two and has already been given the task of running her mother's rabbit snare. With her mother or sister she has started trapping and running snares from for that same into her traps. The pubescent girl is generally so accomplished over, able to make dresses or moccasins, and has sufficiently observed the processing of moose hide so be able to carry out the task herself. In a word, she is so adept in her experience as her physiological maturation permits. Beginning with puberty a mild avoidance relationship, phrased as shyness, begins to develop between many girls and their fathers. This persists even after the girl is married. "Used to be Anna like my heart," Old Mike said. "Now she grown up I wouldn't talk to her. Injun like that." §83

The economic role of the boy has not been as fully developed as the girl's; that is, unlike her sister, he has not been given as many opportunities to learn his socially expected roles

* The information regarding what must have been one of the last cases of puberty segregation was Dorothy Pierce's autobiographical sketch before age [illegible].

1: Honigmann. E-5 (1963-1965) 1969 ND12 Nahane ND12

cleansing did not take place, a person would soon die from the effects of bad blood coursing through his body. The manner in which the blood and semen interact with each other was not clear to the informant, who emphasized that blood could not enter the stomach or intestines without endangering life. ¶27

The sexual impulse in the male is believed to originate in the genitals, whose recovery and sexual functions are closely under the influence of the kidneys. The kidneys stimulate sexual desire when they become "too sick." The testicles are responsible for erection, and their excision also causes sexual desire to diminish or disappear. In a woman, the uterus arouses desire, while a stimulation of the clitoris increases the tension and, in experience, leads to orgasm. In coitus each partner produces equivalent secretions. In the male the semen originates in the kidneys; the origin of the vaginal secretion is not known. These secretions are regarded as akin to blood, semen-semen therefore resulting in a mixture of bloods. ¶27 ¶31

The Kaska have no theory to explain menstruation. Nida dismissing the question by referring to the process as "God business." He added his own version of a common attitude toward the menstruant: "No good for men . . . keep away from it that kind" and expressed the belief that intercourse with a menstruating woman would to promote quick conception. No evidence of menstrual pain or discomfort could be obtained. As we have evidence of girls being periodically indisposed, it might seem that dysmenorrhea is not common. Amenorrhea is reported to have followed miscarriage in Lake Frances. In some women menopause is associated with headaches, abdominal and back pains, and general despondency. ¶27 ¶41

Coitus, as was pointed out, leads to an interchange of the blood of the sexual partners, the man receives some of the woman's blood and the woman some of the man's. Conception, apart from spiritual intervention, is a result of the amalgamation of the bloods in the uterus, while in pregnancy the uterus, which has "caught" the male semen, begins to grow, surrounding the embryo with water. Apparently subsequent coitus of the woman may influence the embryo's development. This is suggested by the statement that if a woman, who has conceived, is unfaithful to her husband, the resulting mixture of two men's blood may result in damage to the forming organism. A child thus influenced in its embryonic development will be born "mean," that is, with an aggressive disposition. ¶27 ¶31 ¶42

Despite the ideal desirability of children, formulas for limiting as well as promoting conception are known. Only one formula for helping a woman to conceive was elicited. This prescribes that eating fresh willow will promote quick conception. While coitus during menstruation is said to facilitate conception, the practice is not specifically recommended for barrenness. The primary motives for having children include a desire "for company," but are chiefly economic. It is reported that when children grow old enough to hunt and assist in housework, they will become economic assets making it possible for parents to retire from many routine tasks. ¶42

Mary Wiley and Pauline Donnelly stated that they did not want children. Another girl, Lois Frances, following a miscarriage decided that she did not again want to conceive and sought to induce sterility by piercing the abdomen of the stillborn fetus with porcupine quills. The method of sterilization is said to be restricted to the Nahani Indians. When Mary Wiley sought to prevent conception, she followed an Upper Laird Indian custom. ¶42 ¶77

1: Honigmann, E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

159 came around and daddy climbed up a tree. The bull wouldn't go away. Daddy hollered at him and even told him: "I'm going to shoot you!" But the bull wouldn't move.

Later Daddy told us where to set traps and we caught a wolverine. We were afraid and threw sticks at the animal. At last we threw the axe but even that didn't daunt him. I got one big stick and tried to reach the wolverine with it. The wolverine started to go for me. Quickly my brother grabbed the axe and killed the animal. We went up the mountain and then found a marten caught in a trap. Dell got a stick and put it on the animal's back for me to stand on. The marten lifted me up. My brother picked up a pole and killed the animal. When we brought the wolverine home, daddy dried out the stomach for us to drink water from. In that way we could never get diarrhea.

Another time, when daddy went us to the mountains with five dogs, we were frightened by some tracks. People were always talking about the mountain lion. We found a mountain lion's tracks and turned back. My little brother lay in the sleigh and I held the handlebars. When mama saw us, she wanted to know why we were back so soon. I told her we had seen the tracks of a mountain lion. I guess it was only a wolf track. Mama saw a mountain lion track once, when she was setting traps with my brother. She said the lion went right through the snow crust. They picked up all the traps and came home.

Pretty soon daddy started sending me trapping with my sister Bessie. We had three dogs hitched to a sleigh. I don't remember what frightened me, but all of a sudden the dogs started to run and we turned back. When Bessie started to work, she took many minutes. She thought it was all right to use any kind of a rag to wash dishes. She used a little baby mountain sod, where it was wet, she wrung it out and put it on the stove to dry. Soon it was all burned up.

When I got older I went hunting with my brother, Dell. I didn't know how to [illegible] but still I tried to track him. He was afraid of moose, and when we shot one, he [illegible] me to see if the animal was dead. He had the gun, I had nothing. He told me to look the moose and see if he was still living. I had to butcher the animal too, because he was afraid. He was too scared to let me have the gun. I guess I was about fourteen years old that time — the first time we killed moose. The next spring Dell climbed a tree [illegible] a moose. We killed and skinned the animal and then wounded another. We were afraid of that wounded moose and ran until we came to the trail road crossing the portage. We could hear the wounded moose right in front of us. It was dark.

Sometimes we little used to fight. Once Dell hit me in the head with a rock. I took a willow and chased my brother. When I caught him, I spanked him. If I had my whip, I hit his finger till grandma got after me. Daddy and mama never licked me, they hit my sister Bessie, though. They didn't want her to be so crazy.

159 When my sister Fanny started to get month sick, she lived in a small wee shack. Mice came during the winter, so I stayed in the house with grandma. When grandpa came back I went with my aunt. When a man came into the house, I couldn't look at him, though I could talk to him. My grandma always watched me. I wanted to go to a dance that time and I started to sneak away. But I heard grandma coming so I went back. Gee, did I get mad! Mama and daddy went to the dance too, but grandma watched me just like a policeman. I stayed in the house one month and never saw my brother. Mama had to cook two households.

1: Honigmann, E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 NaNana ND12

one for the men. I could only eat dry meat and I had to pick the needles of spruce brush one by one, so that I would become a good sewer. If I ate fresh meat my uncle or my daddy would have to chew it for me. And I wasn't allowed to laugh. When my aunt Dolly got month sick she would let the boys sneak into her tent while grandma slept. That's why Dolly lost many children. Aunt Pronna never told grandma when she first started to get month sick.

One spring we were on our way to Dease Lake for grub. All of a sudden the dogs started to bark and we saw a bear in a tree. Uncle Alfred and I climbed up a tree and started to shoot everyplace. My mama climbed up a tree too; we had frightened them with our hollering and shooting. We thought we had shot the bear, but everybody was afraid to go look for him, because we weren't sure he was dead. We made a long detour trying to find daddy's camp but couldn't reach it. So we had to make our own camp. Nobody slept all night. The next day we went on to Dease Lake. Coming back, Uncle Alfred and I scouted ahead. We were afraid that my little sister, Mary, would cry and bring on the grizzly bear, so we left her. When we reached the beaver dam, the dogs started to bark. We thought sure there was a grizzly coming and hid under a willow bush, but the dogs came back and we went on.

Another time Uncle Peter, my brother, Dell, and I went to a mountain and saw a moose through a glass. Dell shot and wounded him. Then Uncle Peter and Dell climbed up a fallen tree and went on to the moose. I asked them to give me a gun, but they wouldn't. When I got to the moose, it jumped up. My brother hollered and I ran back quickly. After climbing into the tree with them, they shot again. That moose had big horns. After he fell down, they told me to go back and make sure he was dead. I went and hit him with a stick. Then I told them that he was dead. Peter must have been about ten years old then, Dell was about fifteen and I was seventeen.

Once daddy killed a moose and built a scarecrow by the moose to keep the grizzly bear away. When we came back the next day we found that a grizzly had hollowed the cache. We took all the fat and cheese off the moose, because we were afraid the grizzly would come back. We had to make another trip for more moose. When we came close to the cache, Peter and Dell shot the grizzly. Gee, he was big! Dell was excited and could hardly shoot. We all went over, but daddy warned us that he might still be alive. I wasn't afraid. I ran right over to the bear and daddy hollered, I skinned the grizzly too.

Sometimes kids used to scare us girls. Once Dell and Jimmy Bear told us a grizzly bear was coming. My little sister and I left, but the boys were only fooling. The next time my little sister, Annie, Dell, Jimmy, and I were hunting porcupine. We got down and the boys went up the mountain. They hunched down a rock and Annie and I hid under a thick balsam. We thought a grizzly bear was coming down to us.

There were many graphs in these mountains. Daddy and mama set snares for them, getting thirty or forty each day. When a grizzly bear digs graphs out of the ground, he sounds up every nest in the whole so forest. He does that when he digs up groundhog nest. This mountain where we hunted was on the other side of Tanzi River, we call it Tanzilude—Bear Mountain.

I spent two winters in Telegraph Creek. There I received Low Inkstorm. When I received

2. For a man lack of sexual intercourse was bad. 831
He became lazy, lost his energy and spirit, and became unhealthy. Very much of it was also bad. It weakened him and made him of a cross disposition. A medium amount was best and was necessary for his health, spirits, etc.

3. A middle-aged or even elderly man made women 831
conceive more quickly and easily than very young men. 842
It seems this was because they were considered to be mature and therefore to have more stamina, and more fertility of semen.

4. Unlike the opinion held by some individuals 842
of Salish tribes, conception could only take place from [171]
one man, the coat of two men never combating or taking part together in impregnating the female. Therefore a child could have but a single father.

Customs Relating to Women As in most tribes women were 841
isolated during each recurring period of menstruation. At these times a woman had to live apart from the people [343]
in a shelter or small lodge erected nearby for the purpose. In shape and materials these lodges were like other lodges of the tribe. This custom is now going rapidly out of vogue. If the woman retires to a corner of the common lodge it is generally considered sufficient nowadays.

A woman at this time must not single out [illegible] with men

out of the house and reentered after the woman has entered. Otherwise the people would have bad luck. 841

DEATH, BURIAL and MORTUARY CUSTOMS.

When a person died the death was at once announced to the people, who assembled and immediately commenced to sing a death chant. Only middle-aged and old people joined in the singing of death chants. If young people sang, they were apt to die early in life. The song was sung in presence of the corpse and the latter was addressed in the song. It is said that sometimes when it seemed sure the person was dying the people assembled beforehand and sang the chant at the death bed. The chief and possibly the only object in singing the death chant was to assist the soul of the dead person to find the trail to the sunrise land, and therefore some thought the singing of the chant at the time of the death rather than afterwards, gave him all the more chance of easily finding the trail. It is said the beginning of the trail is obscure or hard to find and dead people are liable to have trouble in finding it and sometimes go on the wrong trail or get lost. It seems the change from the state of life to that of death is considered to be sudden and extreme and the soul

is considered to be sudden and extreme and the soul

(especially that of an elderly person) on its being parted from the body is more or less in a state of shock or partly stupified and therefore needs people's assistance.

764 533 [763] 775 764 533 [761]

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

714 furnished disguise because they prevented the enemy from recognizing the attackers. Painting the whole face with a mixture of charcoal, spruce gum, and grease served the same end.[8] After the fighting this paint was removed with the aid of grease. Birch-wood shields, designed to deflect arrows, consisted of two or three pieces of wood, each about three feet long and sewn together. Grease layered the forward surface of the shield. In warding off an arrow by this device the warrior spoke a one-word charm, "uk ("swan").
[841] Menstruation on the part of a man's wife did not prevent him from joining a fighting
[834] party but following his departure this woman was bound to avoid crossing the warrior's trail lest danger befall him. Prior to setting out a man abstained from coitus for four days.
[802] "If you stay with your wife you will be killed, you weaken yourself."[9] Winter or summer each member of a war expedition toughened himself by plunging into cold water.

After the men had departed the women left in camp constructed a number of human
732 images, using robes and skins stuffed with brush. Human features were added with red
789 paint. The dummies stood in the camp and each morning women attacked them with ceremonial wooden knives. The ritual gave additional strength to the warriors.[10] Women
837 also girdled themselves in fancy outer belts which dared not be removed until the party had returned. Untying the knot promised death to the fighters. This belt undoubtedly symbolizes the chastity of the women during the husbands' absence.[10] At the same time the rite no doubt allayed the jealous temperament of the men and allowed them to focus on the business at hand without distraction. It may well be that such belts possessed indirect survival value.

736 The warriors traveled quickly. In advance went two or three scouts, intelligent men about 40 years old. At night young men remained posted around the camp, acting as sentries. The expedition camped in brush-backed lean-tos enclosed on three sides and sharing a common rear wall. Usually two lines of such shelters faced each other and a fire burned in the space between. Moccasins dared never be removed while sleeping lest the women imperil his life. No effort was made to conceal the light of campfires. Fre-
736 quently during the course of travel the shaman performed rites designed to prevent
789 bow strings from snapping or to break the enemy's snowshoes when the latter sought to escape. At night the fighting party sang songs magically designed to weaken the enemy.

736 All military action took place on land. The Kaska did not fight from canoes, although the informant had heard that the Tlingit fought from boats. Fighting started as soon as

[8] The same reason of disguise accompanied war among the Kaska. Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kaska* (1936), 61.

[9] Tlingit men expecting to join a war party "were not allowed to see or go to any women. This taboo depended on the length of time they expected to be gone. Sometimes they did not see a women for a year." Swanton, *Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 448.

[10] [illegible] *Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 448.

[10] Tlingit warriors constructed such dummies before leaving camp. "All the men and their wives had such images." Swanton, *Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 449.

[10] "While the warriors were away the leader's wife had to have women tied about her blanket lest as did her husband on the expedition. . . ." Swanton, *Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 450.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

883 positive element entered these exercises, as a boy who withstood whipping or remained in cold water longer than the others gained the reputation of toughness. It was predicted that he would be able to withstand considerable exposure to cold in later life.[8] It is reported that boys around the time of puberty showed fear of the bush. Overcoming their timidity no doubt constituted further training in hardihood.

553 With adolescence a child customarily received a new name, but the circumstances attending name changing could not be ascertained clearly. According to one informant 551 (X), a girl retained her childhood name throughout life and the boy took over his father's at a memorial potlatch dedicated to that parent. Such a pattern hardly corresponds to a name change systematically associated with puberty. Only in anger did one ever call a grown person by his name. Normally people employed relationship terms even though no blood connection could be traced. Older men commonly received the designation "grandfather" while an age-mate responded to "brother-in-law." A child took special care not to utter his mother's name.

883 For the girl adolescence meant the beginning of reproductive life and ushered in 841 menstrual avoidances that would continue until menopause except, of course, during periods of pregnancy. Although any connection between the menstrual flow and hymenal bleeding was denied, people asserted that the initiation of sexual relations brought on menarche some five months later. As Ford points out, in conjunction with considerable premarital intercourse such a belief "would only rarely be challenged by contradictory facts."[9] Girls knew from warnings they had received that sexual experience led to bleeding, and not uncommonly a girl noticing the onset of menstruation seized her blanket and shamefully ran off. The mother followed, seeking her daughter whom the latter hid under a tree. The girl was asked the name of the boy who had "marred" her. The theory that accidents which caused internal injuries also brought on menstrual bleeding probably served as a rationalization for the appearance of the menses in girls whose chastity had been more than casually guarded. Nobody seem-

[8] Among the Tlingit, "in the winter time, in the extreme cold weather, men and boys would go down on the beach and, naked, jump into ice-cold water" or roll in the snow. "They would then switch their nude bodies, or have someone do it for them, until the blood would all too break through the skin. . . . Youngsters were treated in this way to make them endurance and make them brave." (Jones, *Study of the Tlingits of Alaska* [1914], 130.) To the north of the upper Liard area in the country of the Pelly River, "when the winter set in it was the custom in the morning before they made a fire to eat a . . . hole in the ice where the water would open about to the shoulders. All the men and youths that held any claim to being strong and being able to withstand hardship jumped in the water, each being armed with small branches of willows. When they had stayed in the water as long as able, they clambered on the ice and beat each other with willows. The man who could stay in the water the longest and also the hardest whipping with the willows and ask for more was proclaimed the strongest man in the tribe." (Petitot, *Unpublished manuscript* [1918], 8-7.) Among the Tanaina, along with their value as early rising is was the maternal uncle who threw the boys into cold weather if they did not rise promptly. (Osgood, *Ethnography of the Tanaina*, [1937], 135, 155. Compare with Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* [1949], 190; Honigmann, *Changes in Dene Social Culture* [manuscript].

[9] Similar beliefs in a relationship between coitus and menstruation were among the Lepcha, Andamanese, and Mangaia. (Ford, *A Comparative Study of Human Reproduction* [1945], 6.) In the Northern Athapaskans from the middle Yukon River "Tanz," too, held that menstruation was brought on by sexual intercourse. Jenk, *On the Exploration of the Tanz Indians* [1941], 98.

6:Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
upper Liard

cized lunation and the menstrual cycle. Amenorrhea was disturbing because it led to weakness, but occasionally to miss a period promised a long life—perhaps because of the association between the cessation of menstruation in advanced age. There existed no word to designate the menstrual flow. Men never mentioned the process and women spoke euphemistically about camping "way back" and then never in the company of the opposite sex. 883 884

With menarche the girl underwent her first menstrual sequestration in an open camp located about a quarter of a mile from the dwelling. At least during this initial period, the menstrual camp was sometimes encircled by a wall of brush that obstructed the occupant's view.* Although only a single adolescent usually occupied the camp, sometimes a younger girl went along to keep the menstruant company. During her first seclusion a girl wore a large hooded robe of smoked skin, locking sleeves, and with enough to envelop the whole body, while the hem was pegged to the ground.* For scratching her head she employed a bone rod about five or six inches long. A porcupine-quill drinking tube and a special owl also constituted part of her paraphernalia. All these objects were carried on a line that passed around the girl's neck. Across the hood a mother placed another line to which she fastened small pieces of dried meat. The meat would prevent the girl from being stingy with food in womanhood. Initial seclusion lasted one month, during which time specially prepared food was carried to the menstrual camp. The menstruant, however, ate lightly and took no more than four or five swallows of water daily through the drinking tube. Also she remained industriously occupied; when other tasks were completed the girl kept her fingers busy endlessly "weaving" (picking?) the needles from spruce brush on the floor of her camp. Should the parents move camp during the sequestration period, the menstruant followed a distance behind the group and in the company of her mother. Young men dared not follow in her footsteps if they valued their dream power. At the end of the month a skin cape reaching to the elbows was substituted for the green hooded cloak. The second garment provided her greater freedom for the girl's working arms. Now, too, the pubescent returned to sex and sleep in the parent's camp, but she resided her menstrual camp for one more month. Then both garments were burned. A rich man sometimes provided a feast when his daughter completed her puberty seclusion. 881

Each month a menstruating woman re-entered sequestration, remaining in the menstrual camp for the duration of the period. At this time she avoided raw (fresh?) meat, cooked food, and sweet tastes but could drink any amount of water. Also she did not care cook for her husband or children. During seclusion the women quit wearing 882

* Jenness speaks of the Tlingit pubescent sequestrant from four to twelve months "in some remote, sheltered place." (Jenness, Indians of the Pacific Northwest (1943), 181) Swanton gives the period of seclusion as about two or three months. The girl "had to undergo many observances imposed on others for about two or three months. The girl "had to undergo many observances imposed on others for future life, as also the substance of people around her. She took might destroy the luck of hunters, fishers, or gamblers, were shaking from cross, etc." Swanton, Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians (1908), 458.

* It is probably relatively fruitless to ask if hereditary connection exists between this robe, widespread in northwest Indians, and the cloak described by Wagner for the Haisla girl. Wash. Geology Cy in Pac Coast (1929).

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

841 her usual long dress and donned a knee-length garment specifically designed for such a time. She also padded her breech cloth with moss to absorb the blood. In the event that in following a traveling party she came across the scene of a moose kill, blue and red paint applied across her cheeks in horizontal lines was supposed to prevent her from seeing the animal's blood. Always the menstruant carefully avoided stepping across snowshoes, bows, or arrows. If her camp traveled by water she followed in her own canoe. A man avoided the camp where his wife stayed, fearing that close contact with the menstrual blood would cause his legs to become sore and thus render him incapable of hunting or performing other work. A menstruating wife who struck her husband's trail while he was on a war party imperiled him seriously. Hence such a woman did not move around when her husband was away fighting. Sexual intercourse with a menstruant caused a man to pass blood in his urine so that he would sicken and die. Despite this belief boys seized on the easy accessibility of girls in seclusion who, in turn, did not always resist their advances. When they became ill the youths might confess such an offense.*

[134]

846 *Dease River Kaska.* Even before a boy reached puberty he began to participate in exercises designed to toughen him and inform endurance to cold. Stripped to the skin, boys plunged into icy water. Upon emerging they were whipped on the upper arms by fathers or grandfathers using willow switches. A boy did not cry out or flinch under this treatment, which continued until he became adult. The informant lauded the effectiveness of these initiation exercises, explaining that because of them boys could sleep outdoors in winter without a robe to protect them from the cold.*

881 Upon reaching menarche the Dease River girl retired to a camp located some distance from the family dwelling. Here she was surrounded by a circular enclosure made by planting willows in the ground and enclosing an area three feet in diameter. In winter a six-foot high spruce bark conical shelter provided the menstruant with a hut. Explaining segregation, an informant said that it prevented the death of the girl's brother. During her seclusion the girl covered herself with a sleeveless robe of fully tanned caribou skin fashioned with a hood that extended nearly a foot in front of her

* Among the Tahltan people, "when a girl has come to the age of puberty she was made to go every where a quarter of a mile from the main camp and camp alone in a skin tent. She was allowed to work nothing. Food was sent to a branch from her father's camp and no male was allowed to see her or pass close where she was stopping or if he did it was supposed to bring bad luck either to male, child or hunting. She was a male even her bab which she was whenever she came out of her tent. If she before were with the main tent and stopped behind tent whenever she stopped. If it was winter she or one of the other females covered with the sled they are going to gile every week that covered that and when the sled were in a sled or canoe when it was in a canoe when the sled was that had to stay a gil behind the girl could pass. . . . After this, whenever she had her menstrual she had to stay a gil behind the girl could pass. . . . After this, whenever she had her menstrual, whether she was married or not, she had to camp alone for at least four days, but did not have to make a sled or pass boughs across any much she might come in travelling." Dale, Unpublished manuscript (1911), 6.

* Among the Tahltan, which was one which is further distinctive especially whipped each other's backs with willow switches. Changing sled, this menstruate and he never was a common member. (Jenness, The Indians of Canada [1932], 272) "Puberty ceremonials appear to be rather strongly developed." says Dale for the Tahltan, adding that "a whipping ceremony was prescribed. . . ." Dale, On Tahltan Ceremonial Week (1912), 180.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahanni ND12
Dorsey River

face. The hood obscured any view the sky, which was partly its intended function. Below the robe she wore ordinary garb. The pubescent used water sparingly during her seclusion, drinking through a quill or willow tube whose use prevented diarrhoea. To scratch the head with fingers threatened loss of her hair; hence the scratching stick of wood or bone. Initial seclusion is said to have lasted from three months to a year. If the parents moved camp in this period the girl was escorted by her mother. Upon crossing a frozen lake the girl occasionally planted a willow stick in the snow.[a] Menstruants did not have to break a fresh trail. Informants could not recall the bull boat or canoe used along the Fort Nelson and lower Liard rivers.[b] Subsequent to menarche the girl dispensed with the ceremonial paraphernalia but passed each period in a brush camp where she stayed for three or four days. A padding of dry moss inside the beaver cloth served to absorb the menstrual blood.

Ideally it was dangerous to have sex relations with a menstruating woman, nevertheless boys eluding adult watchfulness, sometimes visited the camp of a segregated girl and engaged her in coitus. The following remarks transcribed from a 23-year old woman refer specifically to the post-contact period but probably reveal some of the sentiments and conditions formerly associated with menstrual ceremonialism.[c] Speaking of her initial seclusion, which she passed in the house, the girl said:

> I stayed in the house one month and never see my brother. Mama had to cook two bannocks and I only eat dry meat. I had to pick needles off spruce brush so I could sew good. If I get fresh meat my uncle or my daddy have to chew it for me. Not allowed to laugh for one month! Not supposed to eat wild chokeberry. They say you get gray quick. Never eat fresh berries. My aunt had tent alone but one winter time and I stay in the house. When my grandpa come back I go with my aunt. When a man come into the house I must not look at him but I talk to him. My grandma always watch. Used to be that boy did same thing like girl.
>
> I wanted to go to dance. I much not when grandma want but I hear grandma come and I come back. I tell grandma I want to go but she say no. Gee, I get mad. Mama and daddy they all go. Grandma always watch, just like policeman.
>
> All the boys go to May's tent [the informant's aunt] when grandma sleep. In morning they all go. Grandma never know. That's why mama never has one kid, we all live. My auntie [referring to another aunt, not May] has lots of kids. My auntie never tell when she get sick. May she tell but she never do right. That's why we lose our auntie. They say that's May's fault.
>
> When a woman sew moose or caribou she takes sinew and turns it around and around [describes a circle with her hand]. First time you handle hide somebody hold your hand and make you cut. Woman does this. A man makes you chop things with an. A woman makes you sew.

Attention may be called to the informant's statement, "Used to be that boy did same thing like girl." It is not clear if the informant intended to refer to the youth's vision quest or to his puberty ceremony. Such a ceremony is reported for other Athapaskan peoples.[d]

[a] This seemingly considerate act of the dead followed by returning warriors among the Upper Liard Kaska. See above, p. 98.

[b] Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 81, 91.

[c] The informant is Dorothy Pierre. See Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 36, 240-242.

[d] Osgood, *Ethnography of the Tanaina* (1937), 142-143.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12

Tsetsina
upper Liard

841 *Tsetsina.* Because menstruation threatened a man's dream power thereby impelling his success in hunting, women remained isolated during the period of the flow. Willow Marsit, at Fort Nelson, spoke of willow-bark enclosures surrounding the menstruant that prevented her from seeing out of the camp. A woman also stuffed feathers in her ears in order not to hear the hunters returning to camp. A Lower Post informant described all fresh meat and fish as being taboo to the menstruant. The avoidance referred to the dislike which the animals felt for the menstrual blood.

SEX

831 *Upper Liard Kaska.* Despite a certain ambivalence regarding sexual processes the Indians keenly appreciated the excitement of sexual situations. They also sought to
832 explain the nature of sexual attraction by referring to the anecdote of an old man who could not understand why the sexes desired physical contact with each other and asked the people for their opinion. People felt that sexual desire ultimately stemmed from a desire for offspring. Informants localized sexual tension in the testes, the organs responsible for erection and sexual desire. The testes also influenced human thought processes, provoking imagery of "women" in the men. These ideas in turn helped to create physiological readiness for copulation. Internally women possessed the equivalent of testes. A certain measure of sexual intercourse was desirable because of the pleasure it aroused. Coitus was even beneficial if pursued in moderation. However, a
[834] boy might be weakened for life should he move sexual relations before 18 or 19 years of age. Masturbation led to insanity or blindness and in a child was punished by whipping the hands with a willow switch. Coitus could also diminish a man's dream power; hence a shaman who wanted to maximize his strength abstained from sexual relations and dreamed of participating in heterosexual intercourse. The women in his dreams represented his animal spouses. Men possessed stronger drives for coitus than women and some men were more highly sexed than others.

133 An informant believed that people engaged in sex acts more frequently in summer than in winter.[*] In summer unmarried couples copulated in daylight or at night, but always in the privacy of the bush. A husband and wife waited until after nightfall and the sex act between them always occurred in the dwelling. Sometimes a man reached orgasm two or three times in a night but that was uncommon and a mark of youth. When he was 18 the average man reached orgasm about seven times a week. An estimated six out of ten men 30 years old could copulate twice a night and three out of ten, three times a night but probably not every night. By the age of 30 marital relations were reduced to about once a week on the average and at 60 to about once every two weeks.

831 While sexual relations of a casual sort were common enough before marriage, the
5#3 culture of the Kaska Indians included a notion of love and lifelong devotion. "If a man loved his wife very much he would not marry again when she dies. He'll remain single all his life." Similar sentiments motivated a man on journeys to carry souvenirs of

[*] In 1944-45 we estimated a higher frequency of summer conception. Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 57, 58.